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Chains score with private label H&BAs — Trends, page 36

DRUG STORE NEWS®

Vol. 10/No. 23 **Our 60th year of serving chains, wholesalers and high-volume independents** Published by Lebhar-Friedman Inc. Nov. 21, 1988

Med-Glaser agrees to SupeRx's $18M buyout

ST. LOUIS — Medicare-Glaser has definitively agreed to be bought for $18.2 million, or $6 a share, by an affiliate of SupeRx of Arizona, Georgia and Alabama Corp.

The merger will more than double the store count of Phoenix-based SupeRx, which operates 58 drug stores and four home health care centers in three states. SupeRx, a relative upstart, was born when president Gerry Wolken bought drug stores from Kroger after the food giant sold most of its Hook and SupeRx holdings to another buyout group.

Medicare-Glaser, a 55-year-old chain, operates 44 retail professional pharmacies in Missouri, Illinois and Connecticut, and 41 full-line drug stores in Missouri and Illinois. It also runs seven optical centers and a home health care center in its home state.

"SupeRx is interested in buying the pharmacies and drug stores, not the other operations," said a company source. "They consider the rest of it just boilerplate."

Thus, the agreement stipulates that Medicare-Glaser shed its interest "in certain corporate affiliates." Those affiliates include Express Scripts, a mail-order and prescription claims processing service the company operates jointly with Sanus Corp. Health Systems;

See **Med,** *page 83*

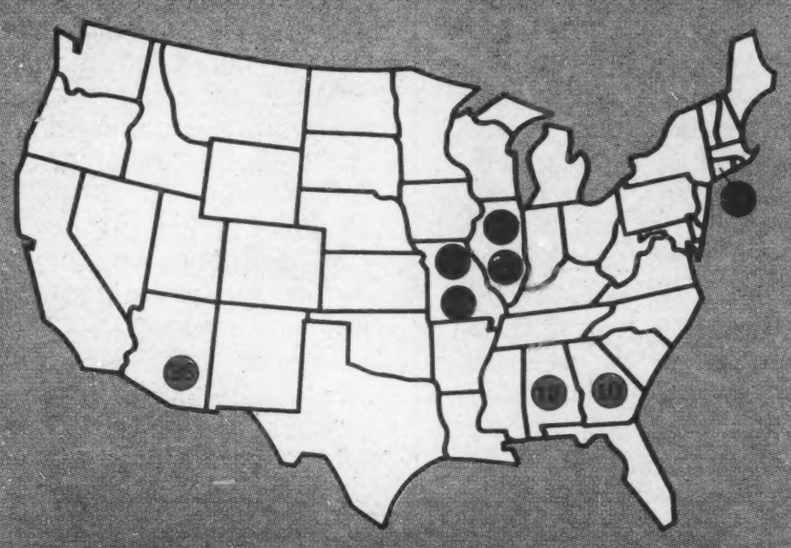
Medicare-Glaser. . . at a glance

- Store total: **44 pharmacies, 41 full-line drug stores, seven optical centers, one home health care center**
- Headquarters: **St. Louis**
- Top officers: **Harlan Steinbaum,** chairman and president; **Louis Glaser,** executive vp; **Stuart Bascomb,** executive vp-treasurer
- Operating area: **Missouri, Illinois, Connecticut**
- Net sales: **$107.3 million**
- Net earnings (loss): **($152,000)**
- Fiscal year end: **March 31, 1988**
- Prescription drug sales: **56 percent** of total sales
- Affiliated businesses: **Express Scripts** mail order/Rx claims processing; **Professional Drug Systems**

SupeRx extends reach with Medicare-Glaser purchase

(Number of stores in each state shown)

SupeRx ● Medicare-Glaser ●



SupeRx has 58 total drug stores—12 in Alabama, 10 in Georgia, 36 in Arizona—and four home health centers in Arizona (one freestanding, three in-store).

Medicare-Glaser operates 44 total professional pharmacies—27 in Missouri, 12 in Illinois, 5 in Connecticut—and 41 full-line drug stores, 39 in Missouri and 2 in Illinois. The company also has seven optical centers and one home health care center, all in Missouri.

Company reports

Ralphs seeks new tenants to replace Giants' Thrifty Jrs.

By Pamela Krein

LOS ANGELES — Ralphs Grocery Co. is seeking new tenants to replace five Thrifty Jr. drug stores that closed this summer in the food chain's Giant locations.

The grocery chain is considering enlarging the vacated 4,000-square-foot sites in order to bring in full-service drug stores, Jan Charles Gray, senior vp at Ralphs told *Drug Store News*.

Bill Henry, senior vp-real estate at Thrifty, said that Thrifty pulled out of the Giant sites in part because the small size impeded growth of the drug store mix much beyond health and beauty aids and over-the-counter products. Typically, Thrifty Jr. stores range from 3,000

See **Ralphs,** *page 83*

'Our competition has given up a lot of the general merchandise categories, and we see an opportunity here.' **—Bud Fantle**

Dart Drug fortunes hinge on its new Fantle's prototype

By James Frederick

LANDOVER, Md. — Struggling to regain its footing after a series of mounting losses, Dart Drug Stores is banking on a $22 million war chest to help it stage a badly needed turnaround. A big part of those turnaround efforts are wrapped up in the mid-November opening of Dart's first Fantle's drug and variety store prototypes.

Dart was set at press time to open its first two Fantle's units Nov. 17 in the Virginia towns of Manassas and Centreville, south and west of Washington, D.C.

Dart chairman and ceo Sheldon "Bud" Fantle called the new, 18,000-square-foot store a "very unique, pleasurable shopping experience," featuring a broader merchandise mix than that of Rite Aid, Peoples and other Dart competitors. Besides a strong drug and H&BA section, Fantle's stores will include major departments for home/office/computer supplies, Hallmark gift centers, appliances, photo, housewares, beer and wine, and gourmet food.

See **Dart,** *page 83*

REX lionizes industry greats

REX roared into the Grand Ballroom of the New York Hilton recently, when more than 300 guests gathered for *Drug Store News*' fourth annual banquet honoring the industry.

Lionized by their peers were Jack Eckerd Corp., Large Chain of the Year; Genovese Drug Stores, Small Chain of the Year; Alco Health Services, Wholesaler of the Year; Ron Peterson, executive vp, Eckerd, Merchandiser of the Year; and Max Factor No Color Mascara, Market Maker of the Year. Three companies—American Greetings, Du-Cair Pioessence and Eclipse Laboratories—were named Advertisers of the Year, and 27 suppliers received REX Market Maker awards.

A special section, starting on **page 19,** shows a pride of photos on the gala, which led to a significant donation to the New York City Chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

LATE NEWS

- NORTH HAVEN, Conn. — A partnership between Marc Glassman, Inc. and WBE, Inc. is preparing to launch XPECT Discount Drugs with a store here and another in Methuen, Mass. Leases have been signed for these initial sites. This effort joins forces of Marc Glassman, of Marc's deep discount fame, and Bill Edwards, former ceo of Revco.
- PAWTUCKET, R. I. — Gary Mercer has resigned as executive vp of operations and personnel at Brooks Drug. No replacement has yet been named, a company spokesperson said.
- AKRON, Ohio — U. S. Bankruptcy Court here has approved Revco's plan to sell its Odd Lot subsidiary to Rikis Corp. The transfer should occur within the next several weeks.
- INDIANAPOLIS — Bindley Western Industries reported sales for the third quarter ended Sept. 30 reached $300 million, up from $275 million in the comparable 1987 quarter. Earnings slid to $755,000 in the quarter, against 1987's $1.16 million. Nine-months sales were $914 million.

Rite Aid plays hardball with PCS pay level

By Barbara White

BALTIMORE — In a successful display of muscle, Rite Aid proved here that chains can sometimes force third-party administrators to reach reasonable terms.

Rite Aid refused to participate in the PCS prescription plan, after Prudential, the company for whose policyholders PCS was providing prescription services, tried to cut reimbursement rates. After two weeks of debate, PCS

See **Rite Aid,** *page 83*

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Revco reassures creditors at meeting

TWINSBURG, Ohio — Revco D.S. officials told about 150 creditors recently that it was braced for a strong Christmas selling season.

In Revco's first major meeting with creditors since its Chapter 11 filing July 28, executive vp-marketing Jim Adamson told the group of Revco bondholders and vendors that the chain's warehouses or stores had received about 85 percent of its Christmas merchandise. The other 15 percent is on its way, he added.

Adamson also said Revco has cleaned out all the slow-turning, high-ticket items—including televisions, microwaves and VCRs—that dogged sales last Christmas. Any additional inventory requirements can be handled with the company's cash and credit-line war chest of $50 million currently on hand, added chief financial officer Greg Raven.

Revco also continues to beef up its financial staff, most recently with the appointment of Leonard Ritchey as accounts payable director. Ritchey last served as payroll manager for BankOne in Columbus, Ohio.

The chain also plans to open 12 new stores before Christmas. Among them is its first unit in Ennis, Texas, and several new stores in North and South Carolina.

Is Dart Group an investment company?

WASHINGTON — The Dart Group is supplying information requested by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), whose staff is looking into whether the corporation should register as an investment company, a classification that could curb the Hafts' takeover activities.

The Dart Group itself first reported, in a 10-K (yearly) filing with the SEC in January, the commission staff's interest in Dart's classification status, said Stanley Rubenstein, public relations consultant to Dart. In a subsequent quarterly filing this August, Dart said the SEC staff planned to recommend that the commission force Dart to register as an investment company. In October, Dart responded to a flurry of press inquiries into the matter by flatly stating, "Dart Group Corp. is not an investment company." The statement described Dart as a "diversified retail company" that "also operates Dart Group Financial, which purchases bankers acceptances."

Dart Drug chooses ad & PR agency

BETHESDA, Md. — Earle Palmer Brown Companies (EPB) will handle the $7.5 million Dart Drug account, beating out three competitors. The marketing communications firm will provide advertising, public relations and direct-response marketing support.

"EPB will be handling the launch of new Fantle's stores, as well as the conversion of the Dart Drug chain to Fantle's," said Mark Goldstein, EPB Washington president. In addition to opening new units, Fantle's plans to convert existing Dart Drug stores to Fantle's beginning in 1989.

"We were very impressed with the depth of the EPB team and its unique approach to solving the marketing challenges our company will face in the future," said Sheldon "Bud" Fantle, Fantle's chairman and ceo.

Lucky set to open 2nd Advantage store

SAN DIEGO — Lucky Stores will open its second Advantage store at the end of this month in a former Gemco site in San Diego County's National City.

The 65,000-square-foot concept is aimed at the time-conscious consumer and includes a pharmacy, OTC and H&BA products, general merchandise, and a full range of fresh produce, meats and fish.

The first location unveiled in the Clairemont suburb this past March, "has received broad customer acceptance," according to Lucky spokesperson Judy Decker.

Lucky expects to open its third Advantage store in the area's growing North County city of Escondido in March. Ironically, Lucky—which owned Gemco until it closed down the discount retailer in 1986 and sold the sites to Dayton Hudson—no longer holds any ties to the property. However, all three Advantage stores will be in a portion of former Gemco locations.

May's Drug tries its hand with a small deep discount format

TULSA, Okla.— May's Drug Stores recently opened its third Drug Warehouse in this market, for a total of five deep discounters the company operates. The other two are in Joplin, Mo.

At 8,900 square feet (about 7,600 selling), the newest unit, located in a strip center, is about half the size of the typical 18,000- to 20,000-square-foot Drug Warehouse. After searching extensively for a location in south Tulsa that would fit its size requirements, "we elected to refixture and remerchandise one of our May's Drug Stores in the heart of the market we wanted to reach," explained Gerald Heller, May's president.

Russell G. Smith II, a company spokesman, said the store picked for the makeover generated about $1.4million a year in sales as a regular May's drug store. "We've found it's important that the store already be a strong performer for May's," Smith added. Pharmacies in larger Drug Warehouses average between 250 and 300 scripts per day, and Smith said the newest deep discount unit could reach that level of performance.

The chain plans to open one or two more Drug Warehouses, probably in the smaller format, in this market next year.

As with other Drug Warehouse units, the latest one's key emphasis is on drugs, H&BA, cosmetics, greeting cards and household goods. Space being at a premium, plush items, seasonal goods, giftware, household chemicals and paper goods are cut back here.

Red and white ceiling-hung signs highlight percent discounts, such as 20 percent on pantyhose, 40 percent on greeting cards and 50 percent on sunglasses. The average ticket is about $14, Smith said.

Much of Drug Warehouse merchandise is bought on deal and shipped directly to stores. Advertising for the deep discounters is limited, with word-of-mouth the best generator of increased store traffic, Smith added.

May's drug store division includes 21 stores in the Tulsa market. Its distribution center is located in Joplin.

King joins DrSN board

NEW YORK — Robert L. King, president of FoxMeyer Drug Co., has joined *Drug Store News*' Board of Pharmacy Advisers.

In this position, he will help the editors of *Drug Store News* focus coverage on the most significant trends, issues and news in pharmacy.

FoxMeyer was formerly represented on the board by John Walz, who recently resigned from his position as executive vp-corporate affairs at FoxMeyer Corp.

King, 38, has served as a senior vp at FoxMeyer, with responsibilities in purchasing, merchandising, advertising and marketing. He also served as vp and general manager of FoxMeyer's Kansas distribution center.

A registered pharmacist, King has practiced in retail and hospital settings and was a clinical pharmacy instructor.

Sixty years of drug store retailing

This apothecary museum is located in the Redington Museum in Waterville, Maine. Reggie LaVerdiere, who joined the family business in 1939, donated memorabilia from all independent stores that were bought out by the chain. LaVerdiere also added some pieces of his private collection to the apothecary museum.

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SPECIAL SAMI/BURKE REPORT

Top 100 items tally $992M in drug store sales

Product Tracking Alan Miller

When we look at the top ranking items of health and beauty aids products in both food and drug stores, a number of very interesting similarities and differences come to light. Here are some of the highlight observations we can make from this SAMI/Burke study which is based on the 52 weeks ending September 9, 1988 showing the top selling national items in the 55 HBA categories tracked by SAMI in 54 major markets.

- In each outlet, the fastest selling item is an internal analgesic—the same brand but a different item in the line. In food stores the lead item accounts for $37.6 million while in drug stores the best seller generates $21.5 million for the year.

In drug stores, 38 of the top 100 items are internal analgesics or cold remedies.

- The top 100 items in drug stores accounted for $992 million in sales, which is 12.4 percent of the volume among all categories measured by SAMI/Burke. Thus the sales of the "average" top 100 items is slightly over $9.9 million.

In food stores, because fewer items are in competition in these categories, particularly in the case of proprietary remedies, the total contribution by the top 100 items is nearly $1.15 billion and the average brand accounts for $14.5 million. The leading 100 items in food stores are responsible for 17.2 percent in all SAMI categories combined.

- In drug stores, 38 of the top 100 items are internal analgesics or cold remedies—23 for the former and 15 for the latter. In food stores, the same number of top 100 items are cold remedies as in drug stores—15 but there are 28 internal analgesic items in the best selling list. There are eight internal analgesics items in the top 10 ranking items in food stores.

Proprietary remedies play heavy role in drug stores

- In the top list of 100 drug stores items 84 are in the proprietary remedies product group. On the other hand, when it comes to the 100 item leaders in food stores nationally, only 58 are proprietary remedies.

The third ranking category in food stores in terms of number of items on the fastest seller is toothpaste and powder with 14. There is only one toothpaste on the drug store hit parade. Seven of the top 100 items in food stores are razor blades as compared with only two in drug stores.

The score in the eye care category is 12 at the top is drug stores but only two among food stores. There are six top selling mouth wash items in food stores against two in drug stores.

Obviously, these rank reports, which are generally prepared for the top 500 items in each product department, are valuable to manufacturers and retailers alike to make certain that the best sellers are accorded the prominence they deserve by dint of their sales performance.

It is also obvious from the highlights summarized above, and in the accompanying tables, that there are major differences in the top 100 (or 500) product mix between food and drug stores. I plan to show how the product mix of top selling items in drug stores varies between markets in a future column.

Top selling health and beauty aids items in national drug stores by product category

(52 weeks ended Sept. 9, 1988)

Category	Top 10 Items	Items 11-20	Items 21-30	Items 31-40	Items 41-50	Items 51-60	Items 61-70	Items 71-80	Items 81-90	Items 91-100	Total 23
Internal analgesics	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	15
Cold remedies	1	1	3	1	2	2	2	1	—	2	12
Antacids	2	—	—	1	—	3	2	3	1	—	12
Eye care products	2	—	—	2	2	—	2	1	1	2	12
Laxatives, stool softeners	—	—	—	2	2	—	1	1	2	—	8
Cough syrup	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	6
Nasal spray, drops, inhalers	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	4
Mouthwash	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3
Synthetic vitamins	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Facial preparations	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
First aid antiseptic	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
Razor blades	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	2
Denture cleaners	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
External analgesics	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Stick deodorants and pads	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Shampoo	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Home diagnostic kit	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
First aid products	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Toothpaste and powder	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Denture adhesive	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Natural vitamins, minerals, supplements	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Total	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100

Source: SAMI/Burke

Top selling health and beauty aids items in national food stores by product category

(52 weeks ended Sept. 9, 1988)

Category	Top 10 Items	Items 11-20	Items 21-30	Items 31-40	Items 41-50	Items 51-60	Items 61-70	Items 71-80	Items 81-90	Items 91-100	Total
Internal analgesics	8	3	3	3	2	1	3	3	1	1	28
Cold remedies	—	2	1	1	1	3	2	1	3	1	15
Toothpaste, powder	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	—	14
Antacids	—	1	1	2	2	—	—	1	—	1	8
Razor blades	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	3	1	7
Mouthwash	—	1	—	—	2	1	1	—	—	1	6
First aid antiseptic	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	4
First aid products	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
Eye care products	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
Denture adhesives	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	2
Denture cleaners	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	2
Laxatives, stool softeners	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	2
Shampoo	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Nasal spray, drop, inhaler	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Stick deodorants and pads	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Facial preparations	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Synthetic vitamins	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Cough remedies	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Hair spray	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Total	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100

Souce: SAMI/Burke

Retail dollar sales importance of top 100 items in drug stores

(52 weeks ended Sept. 9, 1988)

Item rank	Total dollar sales in millions	Cumulative total in millions
1-10	$173.4	$ 173.4
11-20	137.0	310.4
21-30	116.9	427.3
31-40	106.3	533.6
41-50	95.0	628.6
51-60	82.3	710.9
61-70	76.1	787.0
71-80	71.8	858.8
81-90	68.3	927.1
91-100	65.2	992.3

Retail dollar sales importance of top 100 items in food stores

(52 weeks ended Sept. 9, 1988)

Item rank	Total dollar sales in millions	Cumulative total in millions
1-10	$282.8	$ 282.8
11-20	189.9	472.7
21-30	163.5	636.2
31-40	141.9	778.1
41-50	133.0	911.1
51-60	123.5	1,034.6
61-70	115.9	1,150.5
71-80	106.9	1,257.4
81-90	99.3	1,356.7
91-100	95.7	1,452.4

Souce: SAMI/Burke

TRENDS

Private label sees gains in many H&BA categories; market share grows to 4.2%

Private label manufacturers are exploiting niche marketing opportunities, greater consumer acceptance of house brands and growing private label programs in the nation's drug and supermarket chains to carve away at the vast H&BA market. Their efforts are leading to market share gains for many private label H&BAs.

A recent study of private label market trends in the top 35 U.S. supermarket and combo store retailers and wholesalers shows an increase in market share for house brand H&BAs. The study, conducted by SAMI/Burke for the Private Label Manufacturers Association (PLMA), shows that market share of house brand H&BAs rose last year to 4.2 percent of all H&BA dollar sales in those outlets, from 4.1 percent in 1986.

The study shows continuing gains in 1988, with private label accounting for 4.3 percent of all H&BA dollar sales by the end of the first quarter. "H&BA [private label] sales have really gone up, even while some other areas of private label in the grocery store setting—like refrigerated foods and dry groceries—have gone down," said Mina Williams, a spokesperson for the PLMA.

"The private label dental and eye care markets are really going crazy, and areas of hair care like hot oil treatments and ethnic products are also enjoying good successes."

Eye care has become a target of opportunity for private label, according to Williams, with sales of house brand saline solution now claiming 13 percent of all category sales. "Some industry leaders expect that private label brands will dominate the (lens care) market by the end of the 1990s," Williams noted.

Private label cough/cold remedies have also been a gold mine for retailers, Williams said, with sales gains of 20 percent this year compared with overall cough/cold sales gains of 10 percent.

'The private label dental and eye care markets are really going crazy, and areas of hair care like hot oil treatments and ethnic products are also enjoying success.'

Private label vitamins are still gaining ground, too: they now account for one-third of all synthetic vitamin sales, according to the PLMA. House brand vitamins are particularly appealing to both drug and supermarket chains, because they carry a high-profile message about a chain's commitment to health and wellness, and to customer savings.

"The brands create the need, and we copy them," noted one chain drug vitamin buyer in New York earlier this year.

One standout chain drug performer in the category has been Pay 'n Save, which recharged its private label vitamin program this year with a vitamin sweepstakes co-sponsored by its new private label supplier, Pharmavite. The chainwide promotion—supported by in-store displays, signage and newspaper advertising—offered a Jeep Wrangler as grand prize, as well as prizes awarded at each of the chain's 109 stores.

"Of all the drawings we held in the last year and a half, this got the strongest response," said Pay 'n Save spokesperson Nancy House.

"Our market share in vitamins in this market is very strong to begin with, and our private label program is very strong, so we tacked on a little excitement to an already strong program," she told *Drug Store News*. "We use the promotions to get attention, but the private label product has to stand on its own in terms of quality and packaging to begin with."

Product quality, new packaging and product segmentation are dominant themes at the PLMA's "Store Brands Bandwagon" trade show in Chicago Nov. 13 through 16. Private label manufacturers at the O'Hare Expo Center have reserved a record 650 booths to display new products and packaging to the estimated 3,000 attendees. Among the new items:

- Incontinent products keyed to the graying of America, including shields, undergarments, ultra briefs, underpads and carry bags;
- Nail-treatment products, including manicure implements;
- A line of cosmetics specially formulated for girls five and older, packaged with press-on fingernails in pre-painted designs in non-toxic, washable colors;
- A host of new private label hair care products, including hot-oil treatments, deep conditioners and a full line of ethnic products;
- More sun and skin care lines, including sunscreens ranging from SPF 2 to SPF 30, as well as a children's PABA-free sunscreen with an SPF of 40;
- More moisturizing oils and bath products with scents that complement perfumes or colognes. Among them are bath oils that mimic designer fragrances.
- More convenient and more tamper-evident packaging across a wide spectrum of product lines.
- New OTCs, including tablet and natural-fiber laxatives, personal cleansing pads for irritations and pain-relief gels for weekend athletes.

Most private label H&BAs gain in dollar share*

Product	Private label dollar share	
	1986	1987
Synthetic vitamins	31.15%	31.78%
External analgesics	27.25	28.84
Baby oils/creams/lotions	18.92	18.88
First aid products	16.97	17.26
Baby powders	12.68	13.80
First aid antiseptics	11.27	11.27
Razor blades	5.29	5.25
Internal analgesics	4.68	5.6
Toothbrushes	4.43	4.84
Mouthwash	4.35	4.22
Laxatives/stool softeners	3.84	4.19
Hand & body cream/lotions	3.65	3.30
Hair shampoo	3.34	3.00
Cold remedies	3.05	3.42
Cough remedies	2.49	3.48
Hair conditioning rinses	2.12	1.86
Suntan lotion/oil	1.99	1.96
Cosmetic/medicated skin aids	1.58	1.46
Hair spray	1.54	1.20
Denture cleaners	1.38	1.84
Shaving cream	1.24	1.13
Appetite suppressants	1.26	0.97
Roll-on deodorants	1.05	1.06
Facial preparations	0.93	1.01
Toothpaste and powder	0.74	0.74
All health and beauty aids	4.10%	4.20%

*In 35 top U.S. supermarket chains

Source: SAMI/Burke special study sponsored by Private Label Manufacturers Association

Focus: Private label advertising

NOTE

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Cov. 1, Pgs. 3, 8